

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 07027 211409Z

42

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 A-01 OPR-02 OC-06 CCO-00 SY-05 USSS-00

OMB-01 SAM-01 IO-13 SCCT-01 CU-02 /095 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1562

INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITDU69

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM

CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER

CIA WASHDC

COMSIXTHFLT

COMPHIBRON FOUR

COM THREE TWO MAU

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

DIA WASHDC

CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 7027

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION AUG 21

REF: BEIRUT 7015

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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 07027 211409Z

1. SUMMARY: METN CAMPAIGN STILL NOT BEGUN. HEAVY

ARTILLERY BARRAGES CONTINUE IN BEIRUT. SOMEWHAT INCREASED MILITARY ACTIVITY AROUND TRIPOLI. CHAMOUN SEEKS IMPOSE CONDITIONS ON ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT. PHALANGISTS FAVOR SARKIS TO HEAD LEBANESE DELEGATION. AL MILITARY COMMANDER TRANSMITS PHALANGIST PROPOSALS FOR CEASEFIRE TO JUNBLATT, WHO REJECTS THEM. EVIDENCE OF TENSIONS WITHIN RIGHTIST FRONT. FRANGIE REPORTEDLY SAYS SYRIANS WILL UNDERTAKE DECISIVE MILITARY ACTION IF NO POLITICAL SOLUTION BY SEPT.15. END SUMMARY.

2. GROUND SITUATION. METN. CHRISTIANS AND/OR SYRIANS STILL HAVE NOT MADE THEIR FIRST MOVE IN HIGH METN AREA. RADIO AMCHITE DEMANDED AGAIN THAT PALESTINIANS WITHDRAW FROM AREA, "OTHERWISE THE BATTLE OF THE MOUNTAIN WILL BEGIN." LEFTIST SOURCES SAY CHRISTIAN FORCES ARE CONCENTRATING AT BASKINTA, MROUJ, AND BOIS DE BOULOGNE, NEAR PALESTINIAN MOUNTAIN TOP REDOUBT OF SANNINE, AND THAT SYRIANS ARE CONCENTRATING TO EAST OF MDEIRJ AND SOFAR, ALONG BEIRUT-DAMASCUS ROAD. EMBASSY BEIRUT DRIVER SAYS SAW MANY SYRIAN ARMORED VEHICLES IN SOFAR AREA AUG. 20.

3. BEIRUT AREA. HEAVY EAST-WEST BARRAGES CONTINUE IN CITY. L'ORIENT ESTIMATES THAT ARTILLERY IN LAST WEEK HAS KILLED AT LEAST 50 AND WOUNDED AT LEAST 250 PERSONS ON BOTH SIDES. SAEB SALAM MADE THIRD APPEAL TO HALT BARRAGES, AND LOCAL PRESS CARRIES STORY OF WEST GERMAN GOVT APPEAL TO SAME EFFECT. MORTAR ROUND KILLED DIRECTOR OF ITALIAN SCHOOL AND INJURED TWENTY

STUDENTS AS WELL AS ITALIAN EMBASSY FIRST SECRETARY ON AUG 19. HAMRA AREA SHELLED MORNING OF AUG 20 WHEN STREETS FILLED WITH SHOPPERS. USUAL CONFRONTATION LINE SNIPING AND RAIDS CONTINUE, PARTICULARLY IN AIN EL-RUMANNEH-CHIAH AREA. IN ALEY AREA, RIGHTISTS CLAIM REPULSED PALESTINIAN ASSAULT AT BDEDOUN.

4. GROUND SITUATION ELSEWHERE. IN NORTH, PALESTINIANS DENY CHRISTIAN CLAIM THAT LATTER HAS TAKEN VILLAGE OF ALMA. FIGHTING IN AREA APPEARS CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 07027 211409Z

TO HAVE INCREASED IN RECENT DAYS, AND RIGHTISTS CLAIM THEY "ADVANCING ON ALL FRONTS." AN-NAHAR SAYS THAT TRIPOLI PORT BECOMING BOTTLENECK, BECAUSE OFFLOADING HINDERED BY CLOSURE OF SYRIAN BORDERS. IN SOUTH, CONTINUED REPORTS OF SYRIAN REINFORCEMENTS AT JEZZINE. LEFTIST ALHMUHARRII REPORTS THAT SYRIAN COMMANDER IN JENT S AREA HAS PERSUADED SOME 150

FORMER LEBANESE ARMY OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS TO JOIN
PRO-RIGHTIST ARMY HEADED BY COL. ANTOINE BARAKAT.

5. ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT. LEBANESE PARTIES COMMENTING
ON PROPOSED SUMMIT MEETING. CHAMOUN, IN CLAIMED
ROLE AS FOREIGN MINISTER, SAYS MEETING IS WELCOME,
PROVIDED IT LOCATED IN FRIENDLY CAPITAL SUCH AS RIYADH,
AMMAN, DAMASCUS OR BEIRUT ITSELF. HE SAID LEBANON
WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IF HELD IN CAIRO. HE ALSO SAID
LEBANON SUPPORTS CANDIDACY OF FORMER JORDANIAN PRIME
MINISTER RIFAI AS SUCCESSOR TO AL SECCEN RIAD. PHALANGIST
SOURCES SAID PROPOSING THAT PRESIDENT-ELECT SARKIS
HEAD LEBANESE DELEGATION TO SUMMIT. (SEE PARA 7
BELOW ON OTHER ASPECTS OF RELATIONS AT PRESENT
BETWEEN PHALANGE AND OTHER RIGHTIST ELEMENTS.)
PIERRE GEMAYEL PROPOSED THAT AL ITSELF OUGHT TO BE
GIVEN TASK OF ESTABLISHING SECURITY IN LEBANON AND
"TO REPRESS SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS."

6. AL FORCES AND THE LEFT. AL MILITARY COMMANDER
GHONEIM TRANSMITTED TO JUNBLATT LATEST PHALANGIST
PROPOSALS (SITREP AUG 20). HE REPORTEDLY ALSO TOLD
JUNBLATT THAT SYRIAN FORCES WOULD WITHDRAW FROM
JEZZINE AREA IN RETURN FOR PALESTINIAN/LEFTIST
WITHDRAWAL FROM HIGH METN. NATIONAL
MOVEMENT INFORMATION CHIEF ISSAM NAAMAN SAID THAT,
IN SPITE OF EARLIER STATEMENT BY JUNBLATT THAT
MOVEMENT WOULD NOT WASTE ITS TIME ON FURTHER
NEGOTIATIONS (SITREP AUG 20), HE WAS COMPELLED TO
STATE MOVEMENT'S CATEGORICAL REJECTION OF PHALANGE
PROPOSALS. NAAMAN SAID THAT FUNCTION OF AL FORCES
IS TO REPLACE SYRIANS, NOT TO CONSOLIDATE CHRISTIAN
ADVANCES. JUNBLATT LIKEWISE SAID AL ROLE WAS TO
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PAGE 04 BEIRUT 07027 211409Z

REPLACE SYRIANS, AND SAID AL FORCES WERE TOO LIMITED
TO HOLD POSITIONS IN MOUNTAINS IN ANY CASE. HE CALLED
FOR AL FORCE OF 15,000 TROOPS WITH ITS OWN ARTILLERY
AND ARMOR. AL DEPUTY Kholi IS EXPECTED BACK IN
BEIRUT AUG 21.

7. RIGHTIST DISAGREEMENTS: LOCAL LEFTIST PRESS
AGENCY AS-SOUHOUEFIYA DISCERNS INDICATIONS OF DEEP
SPLIT WITHIN RIGHTIST RANKS BETWEEN GEMAYEL AND
FRANGIE-CHAMOUN. AGENCY NOTES THAT NO PHALANGE
REPRESENTATIVES PRESENTED THEIR CONGRATULATIONS TO
FRANGIE ON LATTER'S SIXTH ANNIVERSARY IN OFFICE; THAT
PIERRE GEMAYEL DID NOT ATTEND LATEST KFOUR FRONT
MEETING; THAT HE HAS NOT MET LATELY WITH CHAMOUN;

OHAT PHALANGE-NATIONAL LIBERAL PLANS FOR
UNIFICATION HAVE COME TO NAUGHT; AND THAT PHALANGISTS
HAVE UNDERTAKEN DIRECT CONTACTS WITH PRESIDENT-ELECT
SARKIS WITHOUT CONSULTING NATIONAL LIBERALS. THERE
ARE ALSO REPORTS OF CONTINUED OCCASIONAL BRAWLING
BETWEEN PHALANGIST AND LIBERAL MILITIAS.

8. OTHER POLITICAL NOOES. PIERRE GEMAYEL SAYS THAT
PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IN LEBANON IS NOT MERELY TO
DISLODGE THEM FROM THIS OR THAT POSITION ON THE
GROUND,BUT TO DISABUSE THEM OF ANY IDEAS OF CREATING
A STATE AUTHORITY OF THEIR OWN. L'ORIENT SAYS THAT
FRANGIE, IN HIS RECENT MEETING WITH SARKIS, TOLD
LATTER THAT, UNLESS POLITICAL SOLUTION IS FOUND BY
SEPT 15 (WEEK BEFORE END OF HIS TERM OF OFFICE),
SYRIA WILL FEEL CONSTRAINED TO UNDERTAKE DECISIVE
MILITARY ACTION IN LEBANON. REPORTEDLY FRANGIE
ALSO TOLD SARKIS THAT HE GAVE UP IDEA OF A COUNCIL
OF MINISTERS MEETING IN ORDER TO AVOID IRREPARABLE
CHRISTIAN-MOSLEM SPLIT, AND THAT, IN RETURN, SARKIS
AGREED TO NOT CALL FOR SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL. ISLAMIC
GROUP SPOKESMAN CHAFIC WAZZAN CHALLENGED PIERRE
GEMAYEL TO TRANSLATE HIS REASONABLE WORDS INTO
ACTIONS, AND NOTED THAT PHALANGIST ATTITUDE ON
NECESSITY OF A NATIONAL DIALOGUE WAS AMBIGUOUS.
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PAGE 05 BEIRUT 07027 211409Z

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